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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: Teamwork Produces Successful Results in the Eastern
Caribbean: Nov-Dec 2009 NAS Update

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) The Drug Enforcement Administration, the Military Liaison Office, and the Narcotics Affairs Section are working with local and regional authorities to deter drug trafficking. Many operations have been successful; however, without consistent, reliable maritime assets to assist the Regional Security System Air Wing, drug seizures are a fraction of what they could be.

¶2. (SBU) The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Management Assessment Team visited NAS Bridgetown to conduct a Management Assessment Visit. One of their key recommendations, which reinforces a recent OIG recommendation, is to support a full-time Narcotics Affairs Officer position in Bridgetown. The Team concluded that increased drug trafficking through the region and the need for greater coordination among the island nations and the security donor community to address the threat, made a full-time NAS position essential to the achievement of U.S. counter-narcotics, and counter-crime goals. End Summary.

DEA BARBADOS SUCCEESS STORY

¶3. (SBU) Drug Enforcement Administration authorities in Barbados played a critical role in the location, identification and arrest of a U.S. fugitive identified as Irvine ROBINSON. The fugitive has been wanted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) since 2007 for Importation of Cocaine, Conspiracy to Import Cocaine and Possession with Intent to Distribute Cocaine pursuant to an arrest warrant issuing out of the Southern District of Florida. DEA Bridgetown notified ICE and US Marshals that ROBINSON was traveling to Barbados during the week of 12/20/08-12/28/08. DEA BARBADOS identified the flight on which ROBINSON departed Barbados and provided photographs of ROBINSON boarding that flight as well as

his seat number and description to authorities in St Maarten where ROBINSON was arrested upon arrival of the flight on 12/28/08. DEA Barbados coordinated this operation with the Barbados Drug Squad, US Marshals Service, ICE, DEA Curacao and St Maarten authorities.

OPERATION FLYING FISH III 12/02-12/13

¶4. (SBU) DEA Bridgetown and the Military Liaison Office (MLO) were instrumental in planning, establishing and coordinating Operation Flying Fish III, a combined aerial-maritime operation between the Regional Security System (RSS) Air Wing, the US Coast Guard and JIATF-S to detect, monitor and interdict vessels suspected of illicit trafficking within RSS waters. The USCGC SHAMAL was deployed to the region for approximately ten days. Ship riders from St. Lucia and Dominica were on board to assist with the mission. JIATF-S also deployed an intelligence analyst from their Tactical Analysis Team (TAT) and Intelligence Officer from the JIATFS Watch Floor to the Embassy to support and assist DEA with intelligence flow during the operation. A DEA special agent was the primary point of contact for the operation and coordinated the flow of

strategic intelligence to air/interdiction assets as well as local counterparts.

¶5. (SBU) During the operation, the USCGC SHAMAL was plagued by mechanical and communications problems, however one Venezuelan go-fast was intercepted after pursuit disrupting a cocaine delivery to St Lucia and intelligence indicates that several planned shipments by traffickers were postponed or delayed due to the presence of the USCGC SHAMAL. Further details of interdiction actions for the operations follow below.

¶6. (SBU) The following is a snapshot of other recent narcotic enforcement/seizures in the region:

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

On December 2, 2009, the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda arrested and charged a senior Customs officer for (1) possession of 48.5 pounds of cannabis, (2) possession of 48.5 pounds of cannabis with intent to transfer, (3) possession of 48.5 pounds of cannabis with intent to supply, and (4) Drug Trafficking. The suspect was arrested at the VC Bird International Airport. The marijuana was inside a suitcase that had arrived on a LIAT flight from St. Vincent.

BARBADOS

On 12/10/09, DEA Bridgetown participated in planning for a maritime interdiction with the RSS/Air wing and Barbados Police Force. This action resulted in the seizure of 11 kilograms of cocaine, 67 kilograms of marijuana and the arrest of three individuals in Barbados who participated in the at sea pick-up of the shipment from a Trinidadian vessel.

On 12/14/09, authorities received intelligence regarding a suspected delivery of an unknown quantity of drugs from St. Vincent to the north shore of Barbados. Pursuant to the information, personnel from the Barbados Drug Squad responded to the suspected off-load location on the north shore of Barbados where they were fired upon by the shore party waiting to receive the drug shipment. After an exchange of gunfire, one of the suspected traffickers was killed; the remaining members of the shore party escaped. As a result of the gunfire, the target vessel from St Vincent departed the intended landing zone at a high rate of speed prior to delivery. The RSS/Air Wing attempted to track the vessel back to St. Vincent; however the St. Vincent Marine Police had no vessels available to attempt to interdict the vessel, and RSS aircraft was forced to return to base after running low on fuel. [Note: This event underscores the necessity of a robust, complementary RSS Maritime Unit. End note.]

DOMINICA

On 12/16/09, the RSS/Air Wing alerted the St. Lucia Marine Police to a suspect go-fast boat approximately 28 nautical miles southwest of St Lucia heading northbound towards Dominica. The St. Lucia marine police responded and a marine pursuit ensued during which the go-fast boat, subsequently identified as the Dominica registered cigarette boat "BLUE WHALE", engaged in evasive maneuvers and eventually jettisoned its illicit cargo before being

intercepted approximately 30 nautical miles west of Martinique. St. Lucian authorities successfully recovered 26 bales of marijuana, with a combined weight of approximately 448 lbs, and arrested the three persons on board, identified as Lindell DAWAY, Lawrence LOCKHART and Couriol ALICK. All three of the crew members are known to be maritime traffickers employed by Dominica-based drug trafficking organizations. The vessel was impounded at the Marine Base in Castries (St. Lucia) and the three crew members were charged for the offence of Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Supply.

On 12/16/09, authorities received information regarding a shipment of cocaine from Venezuela that would occur via vessel to vessel transfer approximately 20 miles off the west coast of Dominica. Authorities planned an interdiction operation. The RSS/Air Wing detected the suspected Venezuelan pirogue (mother vessel) and the suspected Dominica go-fast (daughter vessel) in the same vicinity during late night/early morning hours of 12/16/09-12/17/09. Although in the same vicinity, the vessels appeared to have difficulty locating each other, and the Venezuelan pirogue eventually departed the area towards Venezuela. As the local go-fast boat returned to Dominica, Dominican police responded and at approximately 5:30am (12/17/09) stopped a rental vehicle occupied by Lee ANTHONY and Charles CUTHBERT that was leaving the area. Pursuant to the traffic stop, authorities seized approximately \$68,776 USD believed to be intended for the Venezuelans at the time the cocaine was to be transferred. ANTHONY and CUTHBERT were charged pursuant to local money laundering statutes and an investigation is ongoing.

ST. LUCIA

On 12/09/09 authorities received intelligence regarding a planned cocaine delivery from Venezuela to St. Lucia. As a result, a coordinated interdiction operation involving the RSS/Air Wing, the Barbados Military Liaison Office (MLO) and the USCGC SHAMAL pursuant to OPERATION FLYING FISH was planned. Pursuant to the operation, the RSS Air Wing was able to locate a suspected Venezuelan go-fast boat and maintain covert aerial surveillance as

the suspected vessel (Venezuelan pirogue modified with 5 outboard engines and numerous fuel barrels on deck) proceeded northbound towards St. Lucia. The suspect vessel stopped within territorial waters of St. Lucia in the early morning hours of 12/10/09 and was apparently awaiting rendezvous with a go-fast from St. Lucia for vessel to vessel transfer of the contraband. The USCGC SHAMAL deployed its small boat interceptor and attempted to interdict the Venezuela go-fast boat. A marine pursuit ensued that lasted in excess of an hour. During the pursuit, at least two bales of suspected contraband (weighted) were observed being jettisoned. The contraband sunk immediately. The Venezuelan go-fast boat was subsequently intercepted and the eight persons on board (none with identification) claimed Venezuelan nationality. They were subsequently released with the vessel following an unsuccessful search for contraband.

OUTREACH / REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

¶17. (SBU) From November 02-06, 2009, Force Protection Detachment (FPD) Barbados in conjunction with the Regional Security System held a Subject Matter Exchange Seminar on Arms, Narcotics and Human Trafficking in St. Kitts. The seminar was attended by 41 senior and mid level Law Enforcement Officials from the Eastern Caribbean region and the United States of America.

¶18. (SBU) Opening remarks were given by the St Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister, the Honorable Dr. Denzil Douglas, who praised the FPD trafficking seminar as "a strong indicator of US support within the region". FPD Barbados Resident Agent in Charge provided an overview of the seminar as well as a briefing on the mission of FPD Barbados. The Honorable Hugh Rawlins, Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court attended the seminar and praised NCIS efforts to address these important trafficking issues facing both the Caribbean and the United States of America. He stated that "single islands cannot successfully fight these issues alone."

¶19. (SBU) Presentations were made by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of State, the Regional Security System, the St. Kitts Director of Public Prosecutions, the St. Kitts Financial Investigations Unit and Chief Medical Officer, etc. NCISHQ Analyst Luci Jackson-Taylor also provided a well received briefing on Human Trafficking indicators and assisted with the round table discussions.

¶10. (SBU) The seminar provided an opportunity for each attending country's participants to discuss arms, narcotics and human trafficking throughout the Eastern Caribbean. Each delegation presented on the specific trafficking issues affecting their individual countries. MLO Barbados advises that, due to the success of the seminar, U.S. Southern Command make this an annual event.

BRIDGETOWN GROUP MEETING

¶11. (SBU) The Bridgetown Group, consisting of representatives from the British High Commission, the British Serious Organized Crime Agency (SOCA), the Canadian High Commission, the Royal Canadian

Mounted Police, the European Union, the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations, the French Police Attach????, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, and NAS-Bridgetown, met at Embassy Bridgetown on November 18, 2009 for the second time in as many months to discuss streamlining and better coordination of allocating resources.

¶12. (SBU) The NAS representative distributed a resource matrix which is a compilation of activities from each of the international organizations of the group. It became clear that there is redundancy in the areas of training and demand reduction programs. The NAS representative is tasked to organize all the activities by subject area so it will become more apparent where inefficiency and redundancy exists. An update on the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative was provided however few details were ready for dissemination. The next meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2010

¶13. (SBU) NAS Bridgetown supported the attendance of three Eastern Caribbean representatives to the 46th Annual CICAD Conference Nov 18-20, 2009. Lt. Col. Edward Croft from Antigua, Leandra Cuffy from Dominica, and Dave Alexander from Grenada each received funding in the form of air fare and hotel accommodations to attend this event. They cited the Drug Court, sessions on new research in treatment for drugs, and the usual networking as highlights of the conference. The U.S. was selected as Chair of CICAD for the next term.

INL MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT VISIT

¶14. (SBU) On November 18-20 an INL management team led by CDR Terry Johns visited the Embassy to review NAS operations, both financial and project related. The team met with section chiefs of the POL/ECON, MGT, the DEA, MLO, IRS and LEGATT, before an exit meeting with the Charg?????. CDR Johns participated in a live RSS interdiction flight in Caribbean waters that, despite lacking operable radar or maritime asset support, was able to help divert a drug-laden vessel back to Venezuela. Due to lack of resources, there were no maritime assets in the water to assist in an interdiction effort. CDR Johns also met with the Bridgetown Group.

COMMENT

¶15. (SBU) Momentum is building within the Bridgetown Group to develop a robust integrated strategy to assist the region in the areas of financial investigation training, polygraph and integrity testing, drug prevention, and equipment provision. The group agreed to create individual task forces, or committees, to analyze how their organizations can more efficiently address challenges facing the region through closer coordination. Other country donors are eager to support CBSI efforts and seek regular information about planned USG activities to prevent overlap and identify potential areas for joint activities. The Embassy, through the Bridgetown Group mechanism, will continue to provide such information as it has from the ground; a parallel mechanism in Washington would probably be welcome.

¶16. (SBU) The interdiction actions during this reporting period highlight two continuing trends: on the positive side, local law enforcement has shown a steadily increasing commitment to undertake aggressive interdiction activity both independently and with assistance from the USG and other actors. On the negative side, recent activities have put into stark relief the urgent need for additional resources which could dramatically impact interdiction successes - resources that CBSI could usefully provide.
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